January 23, 2009

The Honorable Charlie Crist

Plaza Level 05, The Capitol

400 South Monroe Street

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

Dear Governor Crist:

Your proposal to balance Florida’s budget through only budget cuts is untenable. The schools in the State of Florida are already in a state of crisis. Districts across the State have made dramatic cuts, which even included schools closings and the discontinuation of programs. In Flagler County every effort has been made to trim back to a bare bones budget. These include:

* Eliminating bus routes and activity buses
* Implementing an energy management program
* Adjusting the staffing formula
* Eliminating vacated non-classroom positions throughout all departments and schools

With the proposed 332.3 million dollar cut for education, local districts will be unable to meet the requirements of the Class Size Reduction Amendment. The Flagler County School District will face massive layoffs, across the board pay cuts, and the elimination of programs. All of this will be happening while your proposal calls for an additional 309 million to build prisons.

The State Constitution clearly states …” It is, therefore, the *paramount duty* of the state to make *adequate provisions* for the education of all children residing within its borders. *Adequate provision* shall be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public education that allows students to obtain a *high quality education.”*

The US Census puts Florida at 50th in the nation on spending per pupil. We could change this by eliminating loopholes such as:

Annual Sport Subsidies $24 million

Charter Fishing Boats $63.5 million

Certain Advertising Services $14.6 million

Boats Temporarily Docked in FL $5 million

Feed for Poultry, Livestock, Race Horses, and Ostriches $27.9 million

Newspaper and Magazine Inserts $41 million

Bottled Water $42 million

Sales of Boats & Planes Removed

From the State $74.2 million

***Total Loss of Revenue $292.2 million***

These taxes would not hurt anyone: but to do what is proposed will hurt everyone. The children of our great State are our future. To deny them the highest quality of education possible is immoral and if I read the Constitution correctly it is illegal.

Sincerely,

Michele Crosby